$\mathcal{C}_{\mathsf{ITIZENS}}$ Guide Noxious WEEDS





Department of Natural Resources and Parks Water and Land Resources Division

Noxious Weed Control Program



CITIZENS GUIDE TO Noxious Weeds









Department of Natural Resources and Parks Water and Land Resources Division

Noxious Weed Control Program

201 South Jackson, Suite 600 Seattle, WA 98104-3855

http://dnr.metrokc.gov/weeds

206-296-0290

CLASS A NOXIOUS WEEDS

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are damaging, nonnative plants that are overwhelming our natural and agricultural lands. These

plants aggressively spread and occupy land at the expense of pasture productivity, natural ecosystems, recreation and human and animal health.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF NOXIOUS WEEDS?

ach year, these plants cost King County millions of dollars in lost agricultural production, environmental degradation and maintenance and control costs. Once invasive plants take hold of the land, it is very expensive and time-consuming to remove them. In natural areas, it may not even be feasible to remove them once they become established.

HOW DID THEY GET HERE AND WHERE DO THEY GROW?

Invasive species are introduced through a wide variety of sources such as contaminated hay or seed, mud on vehicles, ornamental garden plants, wildflower mixes, erosion control plantings, yard waste dumping, aquariums and water gardens. Noxious weeds are found

everywhere in King County - in rural, urban and suburban areas; on developed and undeveloped land; on farmland, forests and other natural open spaces; and in lakes, rivers, streams and bays.

WHAT IS THE STATE NOXIOUS WEED LAW?

ashington's noxious weed law (RCW 17.10) requires public and private landowners – including city, county and state land agencies – to control designated noxious weeds on their property. Control requirements and regional designations are defined in WAC 16-750. Federally owned lands are subject to the Federal Noxious Weed Act (Public Law 93-629). Since many people are unfamiliar with noxious weeds, the King County Noxious Weed Control Program (County Weed Program) is available to provide information on identification and control methods. Landowners can choose the control method they feel is most appropriate for their property.

WHY IS THERE A LAW TO CONTROL NOXIOUS WEEDS?

Secause noxious weeds affect everyone. Weeds do not obey property lines and jurisdictional boundaries. It takes a coordinated effort to prevent new noxious weeds from establishing and to



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control and eradicate the weeds already here. The noxious weed law gives us a tool to quickly and effectively stop the spread of the new and most damaging weeds. For early infestations, rapid response

can stop a noxious weed invasion in its tracks.

WHAT DOES THE COUNTY WEED PROGRAM DO TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE WEED LAW?

he County Weed Program conducts annual roadside surveys for noxious weeds and follow-up checks on existing noxious weed locations. The program notifies the appropriate public agency or private landowner of the presence of the noxious weed and provides weed management suggestions appropriate to the site and weed. If the noxious weeds are not controlled by the agency or property owner, the county may control the weeds at the owner's expense.

How do I know which weeds to control?

Noxious weeds are separated into classes A, B and C based on distribution, abundance, and level of threat (how dangerous the plant

is to humans, animals, private and public lands, and native habitats). The goal is to prevent the spread of new and recently introduced weeds while it is still cost-effective to do so. Class A weeds are the most limited in distribution and therefore the highest priority for control. Class B and C weeds vary in priority based on local distribution and impacts. Noxious weeds that are widespread in King County are called non-designated noxious weeds and control of these is recommended but not required.

WHERE CAN I GET THE CURRENT NOXIOUS WEED LIST?

King County and Washington State weed lists are available online at http://dnr.metrokc.gov/weeds or by contacting the King County Noxious Weed Control Program at 206-296-0290.

How do I find out how to control noxious weeds?

The King County Noxious
Weed Program has Best
Management Practices and easy to
use fact sheets on noxious weeds
in the county. These are available
online at http://dnr.metrokc.gov/Weeds/
or from the office by calling
206-296-0290.



CLASS A NOXIOUS WEEDS

(Eradication required throughout Washington State)

1. Milk Thistle	7
2. Garlic Mustard	8 & 9
3. Giant Hogweed	10 & 1
4. Hydrilla	12
5. Floating Primrose-willow	13
6. Goatsrue	14
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	9.	Spanish Broom	1	7



1. Milk Thistle (Silybum marianum)

 $\stackrel{\mathcal{Y}}{Y}$ Robust winter annual or biennial thistle, 2 to 6 feet tall, with stout, ridged, branching stems

 $\stackrel{\mathscr{Y}}{\mathscr{Y}}$ Distinctive white marbling on shiny green leaves

- Purple flower heads are 2 inches wide with spine-tipped bracts, flowers from April to May
- $\slash\hspace{-0.4em} \stackrel{.}{\mathscr{Y}}$ Toxic to livestock and forms dense stands in pastures and rangeland
- Y Can be up to 4 tons per acre in heavily infested areas
- *An established weed in southwestern Oregon, California and other western states
- Currently limited in distribution in King County but could potentially invade highly valued agricultural and pasture areas in the county
- Please report any new infestations, so we can work quickly to stop them from spreading









EEDS



- Y One of the fastest spreading invaders in woodland habitats of North America
- Up to 3 feet tall with triangular to kidneyshaped leaves and small white flowers clustered at tops of stems
- Biennial or winter annual with long, narrow seed capsules
- F Roots and new leaves smell like garlic in the spring
- Flowers in April to May, seeds in May to June

 $\slash\hspace{-0.4em}\cancel{Y}$ Seeds spread in mulch and on animals, boots and equipment

Full up plants when in flower and discard

Please report all populations of this plant so we can quickly prevent it from spreading further













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¥ CAUTION: Skin contact followed by exposure to sunlight produces painful, watery blisters and scars

Spreads aggressively by seed and quickly dominates ravines and stream banks

Up to 15 feet tall with thick, ridged purpleblotched stems and large, jagged-edged leaves 2 to 5 feet wide



White, umbrellashaped flower clusters up to 2 feet wide

Resembles native cow parsnip but much larger

> Flowers mid-May through July

Frevent seed spread by cutting off flower heads, bagging and discarding

Y To stop regrowth, plants should be dug up, removing as much root as possible



4. Hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata)

Fotentially the most problematic submersed aquatic plant in the United States, currently found in only one location in Washington State

- Forms dense mats of vegetation that interfere with recreation and destroy fish and wildlife habitat
- F Spreads by seeds, tubers (small, yellowish potato-like, growing on roots), turions (dark green, shiny overwintering buds) and plant fragments
- * Has been introduced as contaminant on water lilies
- Typically has 5 leaves in whorls around the stem, small teeth along leaf edges and reddish leaf midrib (when fresh)
- $\stackrel{\checkmark}{Y}$ If you think that you have seen hydrilla

growing in Washington State, please contact us immediately



Hydrilla photos by Vic Ramey, University of Florida/Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, used with permission.

5. Floating Primrosewillow (Ludwigia peploides)

Aquatic perennial found in freshwater lakes, streams and marshes up to 10 feet deep



Chokes out native species and hinders water travel, irrigation and recreation, highly invasive outside its native range

 \slash Stems grow both horizontally and emergent, up to 2½ feet above the surface

Farly growth is rosette-like clusters of rounded leaves on the water surface

*At flowering, leaves lengthen to lance-shaped

Fight yellow flowers, 1 to 2 inches wide, with 5 petals, June to September

Reproduces by seed, stem and root fragments and by rooting at the nodes

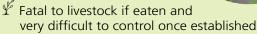


Closely resembles Water Primrose (Ludwigia hexapetala), a Class B Noxious Weed

Please report all infestations of this plant

6. Goatsrue (Galega officinalis)

 \rlap/ Y Perennial, bushy plant 4 feet tall with clusters of light purple, blue or white pea-like flowers



- First introduced to Utah where it quickly spread to cropland, pastures and wet marsh areas
- Known only to exist in a few locations in King County
- F Multiple hollow, tubular, upright stems from vigorous crown and deep taproot
- Leaves have 11 to 21 narrow vetch-like leaflets with no tendrils
 - F Grows in full or part sun and tolerates wet areas
 - Flowers June to October, reproduces by seed
 - 15,000 seed pods and seeds remain viable in soil for 5 to 10 years
 - Please report all populations of this plant





7. Bighead Knapweed (Centaurea macrocephala)

Y Ornamental perennial that has spread into natural areas and has the potential to damage alpine meadows

- The tallest knapweed growing in the Pacific Northwest, ranging from 2 to 5 feet tall, depending on the habitat
- Fight yellow, globe-shaped flower heads, 1 to 3 inches wide, with thin, papery, fringed bracts around the base
- Flants are multi-stemmed with upright and unbranched stems, terminating in a single flower head
- Leaves can grow up to 15 inches long at base, smaller up the stem, with toothed edges and rough surface
- Plant has a taprooted woody crown
- Flowers June to August, spreads by seed
- Dig up and discard before plants go to seed





8. Clary Sage (Salvia sclarea)

Y One of the tallest Salvia species, from 2 to 6 feet tall, distinguished from other sages by the large, colorful bracts found beneath each flower

- $lap{Y}$ Much-branched, taprooted biennial or perennial
- Leaves are large, triangular to egg-shaped with toothed margins, covered with gland-tipped hairs that give it a strong odor
- $\slash\hspace{-0.4em} \stackrel{\checkmark}{F}$ Flowers range in color from white-pink to blue-purple
- *Poses a threat to forage production and plant biodiversity
- Infested a large area in Stevens County and has occasionally escaped from gardens in King County
- Although limited in distribution in Washington, this plant once covered more than 1,000 acres in Idaho
- *Remove plants before seeds form



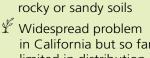
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9. Spanish Broom (Spartium junceum)

 \checkmark Evergreen shrub 6 to 10 feet tall that resembles Scotch broom but has round, smooth stems instead of ridged stems



- ¥ Small, oval leaves appear in spring, often gone by summer or fall
- llowere Large, fragrant, yellow pea-like flowers bloom in July to October followed by hairy seed pods, flat and linear, up to 3 inches long
- F Can dominate open grasslands, pushing out native plants, wildlife and forage species
- F Dense stands can render pastures and rangeland useless
- F Establishes in areas with full sun and limited water, particularly in



Letting will not control spread; need to remove roots



CLASS B & C DESIGNATES

(Control required in all or part of King County)

10.	Hairy Willowherb	19		
11.	Gorse	20	& 2	21
12.	Tansy Ragwort	22	& 2	23
13.	Hawkweed – Yellow & Orange	24	& 2	25
14.	Knapweed – Spotted, Diffuse, & Meadow	26	& 2	27
15.	Dalmatian Toadflax	28		
16.	Scotch Thistle	29		
17.	Sulfur Cinquefoil	30	& 3	31
18.	Yellow Nutsedge	32		
19.	Perennial Sowthistle	33		
20.	Viper's Bugloss	34	4	
21.	Smooth & Common Cordgrass	35	1	1
22.	Brazilian Elodea	36	3	d
23.	Parrotfeather	37		1
24.	Common Reed	38	& 3	39
25.	Perennial Pepperweed	40	& 4	11
26.	Policeman's Helmet	42	& 4	13
27.	Loosestrife – Purple & Garden	44	& 4	15



10. Hairy Willowherb (Epilobium hirsutum)

Typically found in disturbed areas but capable of forming monotypic stands in natural wetland areas, where aggressive growth crowds out native plants

- Grows in same habitats as purple loosestrife, where both species colonize gaps along riparian areas created by erosion
- Grows from 3 to 6 feet tall; entire plant is covered with fine, soft hairs
- Leaves are mostly opposite, toothed and lanceolate
- nch across Showy rose-purple flowers, ¾ inch across

with 4 notched petals, in leaf axils near top of plant

- Spreads by winddispersed seeds and by extensive rhizomes
- Flowers in midsummer (July-August)
- Please report all populations of this plant



11. Gorse (Ulex europaeus)



Dense, spiny evergreen shrub that displaces grassland habitat, native and beneficial plants and shades out tree seedlings in regenerating forests

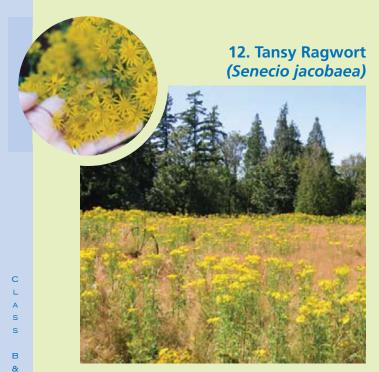
Poses a serious fire hazard due to its volatile oils and abundance of dead vegetation in mature plants



- Most competitive in sandy, coastal areas but also well-adapted to inland open areas
- Stout, sharp, spiny thorns on mature stems and softer spines on seedlings (instead of leaves)
- Up to 15 feet tall and 30 feet wide











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- Erect biennial in sunflower family, usually 2 to 4 feet tall with clusters of yellow daisy-like flowers at tops of stems
- Toxic to cattle and horses when fresh or dry, causing irreversible liver damage
- Spreads aggressively in grassy areas and seeds prolifically; seeds viable in soil for over 10 years
- Leaves are dark green on top, light on bottom, with rounded lobes
- Young plants form basal rosette of dark green ruffled-looking leaves and often reddish stems
- Flowers June to October; starts forming seeds in August
- Plants re-flower at a reduced height shortly after being mowed
- Discard flowering plants as they will form seeds after being cut or pulled and clean equipment used to mow infested fields
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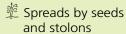
13. Hawkweed - Yellow & Orange (Hieracium caespitosum, H. aurantiacum)

These fast-spreading perennials aggressively crowd out native wildflowers and grassland species in mountain meadows, pastures and deciduous forests

- Sometimes sold in wildflower seed mixes and then escape into adjacent grasslands
- Yellow or orange flowers resemble dandelions but leaves are long and unlobed
- Dark, bristly hairs cover stems, leaves and buds
- Flower heads
 cluster near
 the tops of
 stems; stems branch when they reach the
- Leaves grow mostly at the base of the plant
- Flowers in May and June and continues through early fall







Flowers can form seeds after being picked so carefully discard flowering stems and clean equipment used to mow infested areas











14. Spotted Knapweed (Centaurea biebersteinii)
Diffuse Knapweed (C. diffusa),
Meadow Knapweed (C. jacea x nigra or C. pratensis)

Sun-loving members of the thistle family, usually 2 to 5 feet tall, without any spines or prickles on stems or leaves

- Threaten wildlife habitat, pastures and grassland
- Knapweed invasions cause losses of 60 percent on average of grazing forage
 - In King
 County,
 infestations

have often started on rightsof-way or from infested gravel or fill

Can be introduced from Eastern Washington on trucks, cars, hay, and recreational vehicles



- Purple, pink and white flowers in oval or roundish heads
- Leaves are small, lobed and often bluish-green in color
- Begin as rosettes in spring and form flowering stems in early summer
- Spotted and meadow knapweed are pink-purple flowered perennials with stout taproots that persist and re-sprout after mowing
- Diffuse knapweed is a ball-shaped biennial with small spines on its flower heads that pulls easily when in flower but is a prolific seeder
- All start flowering in May and can continue flowering through fall, especially when mowed
- All spread by seed so prevention of seed production is key to effective control strategy







15. Dalmatian Toadflax (Linaria dalmatica)

- Vigorous upright perennial with waxy, bluish-green leaves that spreads aggressively in dry, open habitats and crowds out beneficial plants
- Vertical roots extend down 6 feet or more and side roots extend out 10 feet or more, remaining close to the soil surface and sending up new shoots from buds along the roots
- Resembles snapdragons but stems and leaves are smooth not hairy
- Leaves are light blue-green, somewhat rubbery; heart-shaped and clasping the stem
- Flowers are bright yellow with long spurs, sometimes with orange centers





Seed pods, flowers and flower buds are often present at the same time

16. Scotch Thistle (Onopordum acanthium)

Large, woolly-looking, biennial thistle, 8 feet or taller

Escaped from ornamental plantings and now widespread in Eastern Washington and scattered in Western Washington

- Infests meadows, pastures and riversides
- Reduces forage production and virtually eliminates livestock use of pastures
- Forms physical barrier to waterways and on recreational lands
- Branched stems have vertical rows of prominent, spiny, ribbon-like wings on stems
- Large leaves have sharp yellow spines
- Upper and lower leaf surfaces are covered with cotton-like, woolly hairs
- Purple flowers, intensely spiny, globe-shaped, grow in groups of 2 or 3 on branch tips













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17. Sulfur Cinquefoil (Potentilla recta)

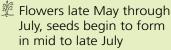
Long-lived perennial, 1 to 3 feet tall with a spreading, woody rootstock and stout, hairy, leafy stems, unbranched up to the flowers

nvades pastures and grasslands

Grows well in poor soils and can also outcompete healthy pasture grasses



- Flowers are pale yellow with 5 petals, resembling buttercups but not as shiny
- Leaves have 5 to 7 toothed leaflets arranged palmately, with coarse stiff hairs



- Roots are woody and persistent and mowing stimulates crown growth and re-sprouting
- Need to eliminate roots to control effectively





18. Yellow Nutsedge *(Cyperus esculentus)*

One of the most problematic perennial weeds in cultivated fields in the Pacific Northwest

Found in row crops, turf farms and nurseries

- Light yellow-green, glossy leaves are thicker and stiffer than most grass leaves
- Straw-colored flowers grow in a cluster of spikes that originate from a single point, with 3 long leaf-like bracts at the base
- Iriangular stem (cross-section is 3-sided)
- Grows from bulb-like culms and spreads by rhizomes and tubers that form at rhizome tips
- Tubers break off easily when soil is disturbed or plants are pulled
- Tuber density can reach 12 million per
- acre on heavily infested fields

 Flowers in mid
- Flowers in mid to late summer and tubers start forming in mid-July and mature in August



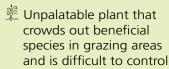
19. Perennial Sowthistle (Sonchus arvensis)

- Deep-rooted perennial, 2 to 4 feet tall with bright yellow, 1 to 2 inch wide dandelion-like flowers
- natural areas, sunny fields and crop areas and is a host to pest of several economically important plants
- Leaves are pale green with a distinctive white mid-vein, have a clasping base and mildly prickly edges, and are mostly found on lower portion of stem
- Numerous gland-tipped hairs around base of flowers distinguishes it from other weedy yellow-flowered plants



Spreads by seeds and creeping roots, often in contaminated hav and seeds

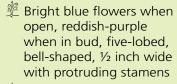
20. Viper's Bugloss, Blueweed (Echium vulgare)





- Colonizes rocky pastures, abandoned fields, meadows, roadsides and dry, shallow soils
- Rough-hairy biennial has a deep, black taproot
- First year growth has a flat rosette of long, narrow, rough-hairy leaves
- Second year plant has a leafy stem, 1 to 3 feet tall; with coarse, red-based hairs
- £ Entire plant has spiny hairs that are painful to the touch
- £ Flowers are close set on upper sides of short

branches that uncoil as flowers open



Flowers June to August; spreads by seed



21. Smooth and Common Cordgrass (Spartina alterniflora, S. anglica)

Robust, clone-forming, salt-tolerant grass found in mudflats, salt marshes and others areas covered with salt water at high tide

- Drastically alters shoreline habitat by filling in tideflats; crowds out native salt marsh species including shorebirds and other wildlife and damages shellfish habitat
- Smooth cordgrass can be up to 8 feet tall, common cordgrass up to 4 feet tall
- Both grasses have narrow, densely-packed flower spikes
- Leaves are flat, firm, deep green with a hairy ligule (a fringe of hairs on back of leaf)
- Roots are massive, grow in radiating rings
- Spreads when seed or root pieces are moved by water, people or animals
- Elowers June to November
- Report any sitings immediately—very difficult to control





22. Brazilian Elodea (Egeria densa)

Densely-growing aquatic plant that fills in open water and damages fish habitat and interferes with boating and swimming

- Spread mostly by fragments that are moved on boats, trailers and animals
- Often introduced from dumped aquariums
- Grows mostly underwater, with denselypacked leaves in whorls of 4 to 6
- $rac{\mathscr{U}}{\mathscr{U}}$ White flowers have yellow centers and 3 petals
- Closely resembles native elodea (*Elodea* canadensis) but the native has smaller leaves in whorls of 3 and tiny flowers
- Because it resembles other aquatic plants, may require expert identification to be certain of the species
- Control required in some lakes, contact the County Weed Program for details





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23. Parrotfeather (Myriophyllum aquaticum)

- Fast-growing aquatic plant that forms dense mats, filling in waterways and drastically reducing the functioning of open water areas
- Stiff, bright green emergent leaf stalks resemble a forest of tiny fir trees on the water's surface
- Leaves are feather-like and arranged in whorls around the stem
- Underwater leaves are limp and often decayed
- Spreads mostly by fragments that are moved on boats, trailers and animals
- Often introduced from dumping of aquariums or by use in water gardens
- Report any populations—very difficult to control once established









24. Common Reed (Phragmites australis)









- Tall, highly aggressive, densely-growing grass up to 12 feet tall that forms impenetrable monocultures in wetlands and along shorelines
- Adapted to both freshwater and brackish water and can disrupt salt marshes by raising the elevation with trapped sediment and debris
- Leaves are 8 to 16 inches long, up to 2

inches wide at base and narrow at the tip

Plume-like flower spikes (6 to 12 inches long) form at the top of the plants and

turn gray and fluffy in late summer as they go to seed

- Stout rootstalks form a dense network that can withstand fires, mowing and other disturbances
- Invasive European strains were introduced into the U.S. and have spread quickly across the continent

25. Perennial Pepperweed (Lepidium latifolium)

- Upright perennial, 1 to 6 feet tall, with many stems emerging from a woody root crown
- Has infested thousands of acres in the western United States
- In our region, has invaded shoreline areas along the Duwamish River, Puget Sound and Vashon Island
- Colonizes fields and shorelines as well as roadsides, rangeland and field crop situations
- Degrades nesting habitat for wildlife and displaces desirable species in natural areas
- Leaves are waxy, gray-green, lance-shaped, with prominent whitish midvein
- Flowers are small and white in dense, rounded clusters at branch tips
- noots are extensive, deep and spreading
- Flowers June through September
- Abundant seeds fall sporadically through fall and winter

















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26. Policeman's Helmet (Impatiens glandulifera)

Tall, hollow-stemmed annual, 3 to 10 feet tall, with fleshy, reddish stems and shallow roots

- Invades wetlands and woodland streambanks and shades out native understory plants
- Popular as a garden plant but escapes and spreads quickly into natural areas



- Large oblong or egg-shaped, toothed leaves, opposite or whorled on stem
- Large pink to purple irregularly shaped flowers
- Flowers mid-June to September; seeds start forming in August
- Spreads by seeds that are ejected up to 15 feet from plant
- Large seeds can float and move down waterways and are viable for up to 2 years
- Pulls easily but stems can re-root on moist soil
- Remove all plants before seeds mature



27. Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria)

Both kinds of loosestrife grow in wetlands and along lakes, streams,

rivers and creeks

- They choke out wildlife habitat, displace native species and clog drainage ditches and irrigation canals
- One purple loosestrife plant can produce over 2 million seeds; garden loosestrife can out-compete purple loosestrife
- It is illegal to buy, sell, or transport either plant and property owners are legally required to control these plants on their property
- Root and stem fragments and seeds should be kept out of soil and water to avoid further spread
- net tall Perennial, 6 to 10 feet tall
- Striking magenta flowers on narrow spikes
- Square stems and narrow, smooth-edged leaves
- ntil Flowers July to September















Garden Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris)

- Perennial with creeping roots, 3 to 6 feet tall
- Round stems and eggshaped leaves often in whorls of 3, both stems and leaves are softly hairy
- Clusters of bright yellow 5-petaled flowers with darker centers near top of plant
- nterior Flowers July to August
- In King County, many wetlands and lakes are still free of garden and purple loosestrife, so every effort should be made to keep these plants from infesting new areas



WHAT SERVICES DOES THE COUNTY WEED PROGRAM PROVIDE TO COUNTY RESIDENTS?

Tearly detection and eradication of pioneering infestations of high-priority noxious weeds

T Weed surveys and consultations

Best Management Practices and fact sheets for noxious weeds in the county

T Cooperative Weed Management Area

coordination

Advice on the appropriate use of weed control methods and tools

T Cost-share toward the control of priority noxious weeds on private and public lands

Teresentations and slide shows on weed identification and control









WHAT CAN PROPERTY OWNERS DO?

revent weed infestations:

T Follow noxious weed laws and quarantines

Theck imported hay and seed mixes for noxious weeds

- Thoose non-invasive species for gardens and landscapes
- Theck vehicles, clothing, boats, boat trailers and camping equipment for weeds and seeds
- Never dump aquarium plants into a pond, lake or stream

Control weed infestations:

- Remove or control weeds safely and appropriately
- T Properly dispose of noxious weeds and weed seeds
- TRe-plant with appropriate species to prevent weeds from returning
- TFollow Best Management Practices for pastures, forests and open space
- TProvide long term monitoring and maintenance following initial control

contact us for questions and concerns: http://dnr.metrokc.gov/weeds or 206-296-0290

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